

2) Appliques and small objects.

The Scythians from the Black Sea applied ornaments to their equipment and to the harness of their horses. They used gold and silver, bone and bronze. The custom of decorating reins and bridles came to them from the ancient East (19), and was adopted later on by all the horse-riding peoples of the Steppes. Since the discovery already mentioned of Pasirik in the Altai in 1924, we know objects of this type of the Sarmatian period, but these appliques are not of metal but of gilded wood, a substitute meant only for the dead. They have been preserved with their leather bridles (20). Small gold plaques dating from the Scythian period, about the VI century B.C. (21), were applied to birch or leather quivers. As to the large early pieces (Kelermes, Kostromskaja, Vetersfelde), they are thought to have been the centres of shields (22). Furthermore, head-gear, clothing and belts, could certainly have been covered with metal appliques. Thus the way in which such articles were used always reverts to Scythian art, although the ornamentation may be derived from their successors. The outstanding motive of these appliques is the animal, among the Scythians always alone or doubled in some heraldic way, never otherwise multiplied.

The majority of such examples have one or more loops with which to attach them. Others had holes which permitted their being sewed to leather or cloth.

a) The stag and the roe.

Nearly every possible way of depicting the stag has been exhausted by the Scythians. It stands, or its legs are bent and drawn under its body. The head is turned back or looks straight forward, with the antlers in the latter case usually following the outline of the back. The stag is found all over the Steppes on small, sometimes tiny appliques. It is particularly popular at Minussinsk (23) and pl. III, line IV, 2 no. 80) but it is impossible that the north of China forms which we are about to analyse can have been received directly from there. The majority of known examples, including those of the Loo collection, date from the end of the I and the beginning of the II millennium. Even in this period the stag has kept certain "true to nature" elements, but the progress in stylization is nevertheless very apparent.

In Plate IX no. 1 the resting position has been retained, but the head and antlers are too small for the body. The stag in Plate IX no. 2 is already rising and the antlers with their strong curve remind us of the stylization of western Siberia, of which some examples in gold are known to us. The composition where the head in profile rests against the hind-quarters but both antlers are drawn, has been found already among the Scythians (24). In many examples it is difficult to understand the arrangement of the legs. North of China repliquas are at times so exaggerated as to be inextricable (Pl. IX no. 3). The form is nearly that of a disk, slightly arched.